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July 2023 Connecting the DOTs

STIP Meetings Held in July

STIP meetings offer community members the chance to actively participate in planning the future of our transportation system.

Find recordings of each of the four STIP meetings on the SDDOT website: <https://dot.sd.gov/projects-studies/planning/tentative-statewide-transportation-improvement-program-stip>.



This social media recruitment post was a BIG hit with **over 90,000** people liking/sharing/commenting. KELO also picked up the post and ran a story! **Thanks to Stacy Parmely, SDDOT Accountant for sharing these great pictures!**

<https://www.keloland.com/news/local-news/mule-deer-spotted-outside-sddot-office-doors/>

"This young mule deer buck is pictured in front of the Becker-Hansen Building (SDDOT's Central Office in Pierre). He must have heard that we are hiring for **Engi"deers"** at the SDDOT and is patiently waiting for the opportunity to interview!

"If you're looking for a rewarding career with a great work-life balance, SDDOT is hiring for a variety of positions across the state (only human engineers may apply)!"



The Secretary's Corner

SDDOT partners each summer with FHWA in the National Summer Transportation Institute (NSTI) held at SDSU and South Dakota Mines (SDSM&T). Students explore engineering careers in transportation during these week-long camps. During each camp, students are introduced to different aspects of transportation engineering including planning, materials, and transportation modes.

Students participate in hands-on lab activities in workshops, and learn from subject experts about the transportation sector and the problems engineers solve!

At the SDSM&T camp in Rapid City, students had the opportunity to learn about the state's first-completed Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI). **Steve Palmer, Rapid City Area Engineering Supervisor**, gave a short presentation to the class and then physically demonstrated the functionality of the DDI through a onsite tour. The students were able to actively engage with Steve and others to fully understand the many benefits of the DDI design for the traveling public.

Our vision is to provide better lives through better transportation, which starts with engaging the next generation of SDDOT leaders and innovators!



South Dakota Fallen Hero Bridge Dedications held in June

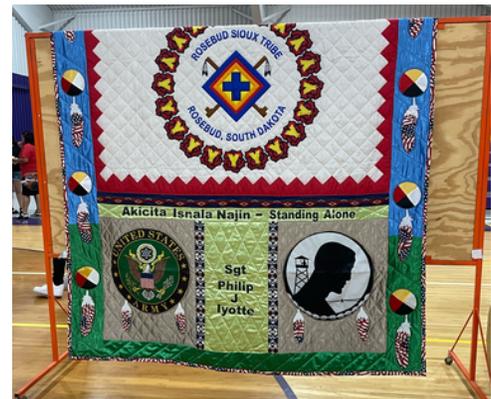
Find more information and ceremonial photos at . . .

<https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/resources/Fallen%20Hero%20Bridge%20Dedications/Bridge%20Heroes.aspx>

Mark Peterson, Aberdeen Region Engineer joined local and state officials as well as family members to honor PFC Cyril Kaiser. He is now honored with a sign on the U.S. Highway 12 Bridge south of Lake Mina.



Below are pictures from the ceremony and ceremonial quilt in honor of SGT Philip Iyotte. Sgt Iyotte is now honored on the U.S. Highway 83 Little White River Bridge.



Brad Letcher, Huron Area Engineer, attended the ceremony of CW2 Scott A. Saboe. The sign crew installed the CW2 Scott A. Saboe Memorial Bridge sign on the James River north of Huron. The crew consists of Lead Highway Maintenance Worker John Weigel and Highway Maintenance Worker Joshua Haar.



South Dakota Fallen Hero Bridge Dedications held in July

Jeff Brink and Mike Voelsch attended the ceremony at the Terry Redlin Art Center in Watertown on July 1, 2023. Crews placed the signage honoring HM2 Charles Langenfeld on U.S. Highway 212 Bridge over Willow Creek in Watertown.



Chamberlain crew members installed the signs in memory of SP5 Samuel Jorgensen. Left to right: Tom Ascher, Marty Waugh, and Bruce Robison.



The sign honoring SSG Robb Rolffing was installed by Jared Lahr and Matt Konda from the Sioux Falls Maintenance shop.



Finance Corner

By Patti Devitt, Accounting Manager

Reminder – All Vouchers need to be scanned to File Director! It is that time of year when the BFM and Legislative Audit are looking at our vouchers. BFM is looking for accruals and will contact central office to obtain documentation to verify correct entry of accruals. If the voucher has not been scanned to File Director, central office staff will need to reach out to region, area and central offices to obtain the information. Legislative Audit looks directly into File Director for the vouchers.

By scanning your vouchers right away, you will save everyone time in obtaining the information that BFM and Legislative Audit is reviewing.

(Patti shared this information via email also on Wednesday, July 19, 2023.)



Governor Noem Appoints Lockwood and Schmidt to Railroad Board

Scott Lockwood was born in Huron and has lived in Beadle, Brookings, Custer, Fall River, Pennington, Potter, Spink and Walworth counties. He started working for the Chicago & North Western Railroad as a section laborer in 1977 in Rapid City. During his tenure with C&NW he earned a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Chadron (NE) State College. In 1992 he began working for the Burlington Northern Railroad as a welder in Douglas, Wyoming.



His career with BNSF included several promotions - Assistant Roadmaster, Supervisor Maintenance Planning, Manager Maintenance Planning and Assistant Director Maintenance Schedules (Central Region) - which took him to Gillette, Wyoming and Fort Worth, Texas. He retired from BNSF in 2016 and moved back to South Dakota. He enjoys hiking, treasure hunting, genealogy, photography and reading/writing historical books. He replaces Gary Doering.



Ralph Schmidt grew up in the Big Stone City area, as a farmer until 1996. At that time, Ralph was hired with the Sisseton Milbank Railroad (SMRR) as a locomotive engineer. In 1999, Ralph accepted the position of General Manager of the SMRR and continues in that role today. In those 27 years, Ralph has seen many challenges in all aspects of short line railroading.

In 2009, Ralph, along with his family started Schmidt Spray Foam Insulation LLC. Our business currently has locations in Milbank and Britton, SD and employs 9 people. Ralph serves on the Lockwood Township Board in Roberts County and is currently the president of our homeowner's association. He is a husband, father and grandfather who loves to spend time fishing and camping with his family. He is replaces Jon Kirby.

Find additional information about the Railroad Board at

<https://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/boardmembers.aspx?BoardID=88>

AGC /DOT Fishing Tourney:

AGC's Summer Fishing Tournament took place in June at the Signature Lodge in Pierre. A total of 25 teams and 70 fisher people took to the Missouri River for a great day of fishing and friendship.

The Calcutta was a huge success, AGC anticipates over \$5,000 going to their scholarship fund! Thank you SDDOT participants and thank you sponsors!

CONGRATULATIONS WINNERS:

1st Place: Morris #1 - Josh Brown, **Derek Blotske (husband of Laura Blotske - SDDOT Transportation Specialist II/Finance Dept.(Pierre),** and John Morris

2nd Place: SDDOT Operations - Pictured **Christina Bennett, Ryan Johnson, and Chris Ott**)

3rd Place: Morris #2 - Logan Dahl, Ryen Reed, and Brandon Ryckman

4th Place: Jensen Construction - Hank Asher, Cody Asher, and Tom Wiehoff

Largest Walleye: Josh Brown, Morris, Inc. - 8.83#

Largest Non-Walleye: Jason Humphrey, SDDOT - 7.75#
Northern Pike

DOT Retiree, Bill Englehart's team earned 5th place . . . and won the trophy for the largest fish! (Pictured Left to Right: Bill, Jason Humphrey, and Jack Dokken.)

Pictured Left to Right: Carol Evans, Cody Asher, Jason Humphrey, Jack Dokken, Bill Englehart, Christina Bennett, Chris Ott, and Ryan Johnson.



LDP 2023 (Cohort #3)

June Session Highlights - Leading an Organization

Leading an organization was the topic of the SDDOT's Leadership Development Program (LDP) Cohort #3 meeting on June 28 and 29, 2023, in Chamberlain, SD.

Mike Behm and Travis Dressen represented the SDDOT Executive Team and discussed the topics of electric vehicles and managing conflict for controversial topics. Mike challenged the LDP group to perform an activity to practice conflict management skills.

The second half of the session delved into organizational strategic planning concepts and how organizations grow through strategic thinking, planning, and action. Small groups had the opportunity to create their own company. Once they determined the product or service they would provide, each group developed their company's vision, mission, and values.

(Photos below show the small groups in action!)

The last meeting for LDP 2023 is Aug. 23 and 24, 2023. The group will meet in Pierre and attend a Transportation Commission meeting with graduation to follow.

LDP 2024: SDDOT LDP will begin accepting applications in January 2024. The meeting dates for the LDP training in 2024 include April 3-5, May 8-9, June 26-27, Aug. 7-8, Sept. 18-19, and Oct. 30-31. To learn more about the program, please click [here](#) or contact **Brenda Thomas, Training & Development Specialist**.

Do you know SDDOT's vision, mission, and values? Click [here](#) to learn more.



Photos Left to Right:

Logan Gran, Danny Varilek and Ron Bren discuss their vision, mission, and values for their company . . . the South Dakota Bakers' Association.

Kari Kroll documents her team's vision for LL Cool PJs.

Sam Gilkerson, Kirk Henderson and Luke Neville discuss their company's vision. To the right, **Brent Morford** receives and documents ideas from **Chris Voelker**.



TRAINING UPDATE

Learn ~ Engage ~ Improve
August 2023



WORKFORCE

LEADERSHIP COURSES

[Leadership Summit \(DOT\)](#)

Aug. 15-16 | 1 p.m. | Pierre

[Leadership Conference \(BHR\)](#)

Sept. 7 | 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. | Pierre

TECHNOLOGY

[Microstation CONNECT Training](#)

Sept. 6 | 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. | Pierre

Sept. 7 | 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. | Pierre

[Bentley Online Training](#)

This microsite serves as a “one stop shop” where you can find links to resources for your Bentley products and services curated together in a single place.

SKILLS COURSES

[Working in Indian Country](#)

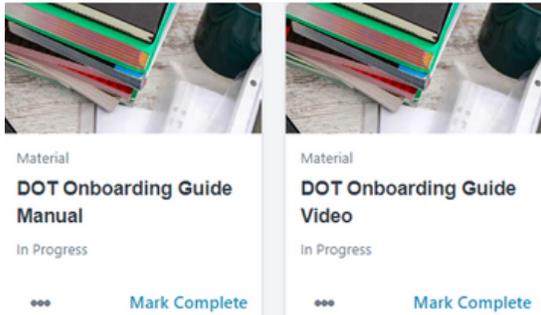
Oct. 24 | 8 – 4:30 p.m. | Chamberlain

Oct. 26 | 8 – 4:30 p.m. | Aberdeen

[New Employee Orientation](#)

Nov. 7 (1p.m. - 5 p.m.) and Nov. 8 (8 a.m. - Noon) | Pierre

[Onboarding Guide Resources](#)



SDLEARN UPDATE

All SDDOT courses are loaded into the new system, we are working on adding the last 5 years of training to your transcripts and hope to be done by the **end of July**.

You can now access [SDLearn](#) with the LMS icon on your desktop, do not enter a username or password. Simply click the “**Employee Login**” button.

July Mentoring Minute

Tips for Making the Most of Your Mentoring Experience

Kim Wheeler, The Training Connection



Mentoring can be a career and life-changing experience...or it can feel like a bit of a letdown. So, what makes the difference? **The Training Connection, Inc.** asked mentees who have participated in formal mentoring programs to share their advice on how to make the most of mentoring and ensure that, not only is it time well spent, but that the investment pays off for years to come. Below are some tips they shared along with some ideas for how to apply them.

You get out of it what you put into it. You have to invest the effort if you want to see results. Bring your best self to the experience. Come to the mentoring program committed and willing to work and dedicate time, energy, and focus to mentoring. From there, it's a matter of being involved. Mentoring can offer trainings, events, tools, and resources, take advantage of as many as you can. Attend the group events and engage fully with others in the cohort. Navigate The Mentoring Connection to mine the online resources of newsletters, discussion guides, and other valuable resources. Act on recommendations from your mentor and follow up on the goals you set for yourself.

Take the lead. The mentoring program is designed to be mentee-driven, so take those reins! Schedule meetings, reach out often, identify discussion topics for mentoring meetings and come prepared with questions or specific challenges to discuss. Be clear about what you're hoping to gain from the program and how you hope your mentor can help. Moreover, if you want your mentor to do something differently, tell them! Be proactive and assertive in communicating your mentoring needs.

Make connections. Among the greatest strengths of a mentoring program is its ability to connect employees from across an organization who probably would not normally cross paths or interact. The mentoring program is full of opportunities to expand your professional network, from building rapport with your mentor and seeking out situational mentors to participating in breakout groups at formal trainings, volunteering for groups or activities as part of your mentoring work, or attending mentoring events. Make time to engage in these opportunities, and don't be afraid to suggest and/or volunteer to organize an event. Mentoring programs offer a great way to meet people from other parts of your agency and connect right away over the shared focus of mentoring.

Be open, be honest. Mentoring work requires openness and honesty from both parties. Having an open mind, being open to feedback, and openly sharing your goals, challenges, questions, and concerns is key to receiving honest and helpful feedback and advice from your mentor. Don't be afraid to open up to your mentor —the better they get to know you, the more they learn about you, and the more they can help. Equally as important to being open and honest with your partner, however, is being open and honest with yourself. We all have strengths and

Continued . . .

Tips continued

weaknesses. Professional growth happens when we learn how to capitalize on our strengths and take steps to grow in those areas of opportunity. Be willing to look within, or perhaps even ask for feedback from others, to identify where you're strong and where you can grow.

Talk to your supervisor. Supervisors can make a huge difference in your mentoring experience—but only if they know what you're doing. Achieving career goals or working through professional challenges generally requires building and honing specific technical or interpersonal skills. Mentees can talk with their supervisors about the skills they're building even if they don't feel comfortable sharing their overarching goals or challenges. Sharing some aspects of your program work is important because it enables supervisors to recognize opportunities that may help you apply those skills on the job, share ideas and insights, and observe your gains and successes.

Apply what you're learning. Applying what you've learned on the job is beneficial for several reasons. For one, it helps cement new skills and allows the mentee to tailor what they've learned to be relevant and useful in their current role. It also demonstrates a willingness to learn and a commitment to professional growth and development, showing supervisors that the mentee has the initiative, drive, and discipline to lead themselves and others.

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Pictured: Mentoring pairs recently completed tours in the Rapid City Region. They toured the GCC cement plant, exit 37 construction project, and Rinker Materials.





SDDOT Employee News and Updates

July 2023 Longevity:

Jeff Gillam, Project Technician: 20 years (Rapid City Area)

Hadly Eisenbeisz, Bridge Construction Engineer: 35 years (Central Office/Bridge Design)

Greg Aalberg, Highway Construction Project Engineer Manager: 35 years (Sioux Falls Area)

Jerry Hansen, Highway Maintenance Supervisor: 35 years (Yankton Area)

Monte Rice, Senior Region Design Manager: 35 years (Mitchell Region)

Pictured is **Greg Aalberg** receiving his 35 year pin and plaque plate from **Harry Johnston, Sioux Falls Area Engineer**. **Greg is an Engineering Supervisor for the Sioux Falls Area**. He started his DOT career in the Huron Area office. He has been a supervisor in the Sioux Falls Area for 27 years.



Jeff Gillam (right) Project Technician (Rapid City Area) received his 20 year longevity pin from **John Gerlach (left) Engineering Supervisor (Rapid City Area)**.

Mike Nold, Pierre Lead Highway Maintenance Worker, received his 15 years of service pin from **Hannah Covey, Pierre Region Traffic Engineer Manager**.



Jason Hammrich, Aberdeen Equipment Technician, received his 15-year pin from **Mark Prezler, Aberdeen Equipment Shop Foreman**.

SDDOT Employee News and Updates

July New Hires:

Ty Fitzler, Highway Maintenance Worker, Sioux Falls
 Kade Taylor, Equipment Mechanic, Pierre
 Julia Harkins, Senior Secretary, Pierre
 Boyd Stambach, Highway Maintenance Worker, Faith
 Darrik Delozier, Highway Maintenance Worker, Yankton
 Matthew Waldner, Highway Maintenance Worker, Leola
 Joseph Weishaar, Highway Maintenance Worker, Rapid City
 Zach Hoffman, Highway Maintenance Worker, Wall
 Lisa Mauseth, Senior Secretary, Sioux Falls
 Tyler Kennedy, Highway Maintenance Worker, Pierre
 Jesse Biel, Highway Maintenance Worker, Sisseton
 Alexander Smith, Assistant Region Bridge Engineer, Sioux Falls



July Promotions & Lateral Position Changes:

Andrew Prickett, Journey Transportation Technician, Mitchell
 Brian Wacholz, Equipment Management Specialist, Aberdeen
 Caleb Huettl, Highway Maintenance Worker, Aberdeen
 Josh Jorgensen, Project Technician, Sioux Falls
 Jacob Rosecky, Road Design Engineering Manager, Pierre
 Brian Simpson, Highway Maintenance Worker, Winner
 Trevor Lambert, Lead Highway Maintenance Worker, Brookings



A note from your Well-being Champions...

If you have state health insurance, you should know the **BIGGEST** change to the LiveWellSD wellness program has to do with **biometric screenings**. They will not be offered onsite, but rather you will need to have them done **DURING** an **Annual Wellness Preventive Exam** with your primary care provider, which is **AT NO COST** with our insurance.

When employees call their provider to set up an appointment, they are going to ask for the "Annual Wellness Preventive Exam" and bring the [biometric screening form](#) with them. The provider then will order the lab tests as noted on the form at the appointment in turn making them part of the appointment and at no cost. The form needs to be signed and filled out by the provider and signed by the employee, then best submitted before March 1, 2024 to ensure it's processed by the April 1st deadline. These services are also accessible for covered spouses.

SIDE NOTE: the state insurance does not require 365 days between Annual Wellness Prevention exams. You are allowed one exam per plan year (July-June). Keep this in mind to stay ahead of the deadline. **Need the form?**

Click [HERE](#). Got questions? Ask a Well-being Champion. We are here to help.

SDDOT Employee News and Updates

Congrats to Ben Brown, Certification Specialist in the Materials office in Pierre, on his recent victory!

Ben noted, "Chris and I were fortunate to win the **49th Annual South Dakota Governor's Cup**, with a two day total weight of 40.22 lbs."

Find all results . . . <https://thefishingcrew.com/2023-sd-gov-cup-live-results/>

Chris Haines (grey shirt) and Ben Brown (green shirt) are pictured with their **Day 2 overs** in the left-hand photo. (Overs are fish over 20", per state fishing regulations one fish over 20", per angler, per day is allowed.) And, they are then pictured with their trophy and grand prize check!



Pierre Region Traffic Crew received their Impact Awards!



Intern Appreciation Event (July in Pierre)

SDDOT Employee News and Updates: The Joys of Semi-Retirement by Joel Gengler

My wife and I had the good fortune to visit Lisbon “Lisboa” Portugal recently. The trip was to celebrate my SDDOT retirement in April and our 35th wedding anniversary in July. I’m now back with the SDDOT part-time in the Right-of-Way Office helping in the transition and working on special projects. **I get the best of both worlds, semi-retirement is great!**

- The first photo is a “gas station” in the old part of Lisbon. A creative/innovative way to provide fueling in a very crowded area.
- Castle is Sao (Saint) Jorge Castle built in 11th Century. (Two photos)
- Jeronimos Monastery - built in the late 1400s.
- Arc Triumph (Arco da Rua Augusta) in the lower part of Lisbon built in the 18th century.
- Bottom row are photos of Carol and me enjoying Lisbon sites and a view of the rooftops.



SDDOT Employee News and Updates

Sylar James and Ripley Rey Doorn were born on May 9, 2023.

Sylar (left) weighed 6 lbs. 9 oz. and he was 19 inches in length.

Ripley (right) weighed 5 lbs. 5 oz. and she was 18 inches in length.

Sylar and Ripley are the children of Danny and Jesse Doorn. **Danny is the Assistant Pavement Management Engineer in Project Development.**

Jesse is the Education Director for the Real Estate Commission for the Department of Labor/Regulation.



Shaun and Brandy Cooper were married on July 2, 2023.

Brandy is an Accountant in the Finance Department in Pierre.

Sean and Brandy are pictured with their kids and granddaughter on their wedding day.



Delilah Skye Neville was born on May 23, 2023. She weighed 7 lbs. and 6 oz. and was 20.5 inches long!

Delilah is the daughter of Luke and Jennifer Neville. Luke is Lead Highway Maintenance Worker in Philip.



Augustus "Gus" Sze Chiu Chan was born on July 8 2023. He weighed **6 lbs. and 14 oz.**

Parents are Norman Chan and Emma Carbonneau. Grandparents Brenda and Eugene Thomas. **Brenda is the SDDOT Training & Development Specialist (Pierre).**



In Sympathy . . .



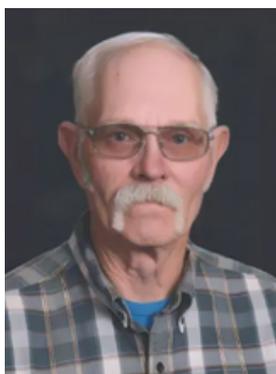
Sympathy is extended to **Patty Thompson, Accountant III, (Pierre)** on the passing of her mother. Wilma Joyce Curtin passed away on June 25, 2023.

A Christian Funeral Mass was celebrated on July 3, 2023, at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Cathedral in Rapid City. Graveside services followed at Black Hills National Cemetery in Sturgis.



Sympathy is extended to **June Hansen, Civil Rights Compliance Officer/ADA Coordinator, (Pierre)** on the passing of her father. Dr. James Hansen passed away on July 5, 2023. Services were held on July 11, 2023, at the First Congregational UCC Church with inurnment at the Black Hills National Cemetery on July 14, 2023.

In 1976, Jim began his state government career as the Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services with the Department of Education. He was promoted to numerous positions within the department and ended his 24-year career as the Secretary for the Department of Education & Cultural Affairs. His government service spanned from Governor Kneip to Governor Noem.



Sympathy is extended to friends, former co-workers, and family of **Darwin Ripley (Pierre)** who passed away on July 22, 2023.

Darwin served the SDDOT as a large equipment mechanic for the Pierre Region.

Funeral services are scheduled for Wednesday, Aug. 2, 2023, at Faith Lutheran Church in Pierre.



Thank you for sharing information about the passing of loved ones. It is vital that we are able to comfort and support one another during a time of loss.

Staff are also encouraged to share information about the passing of former SDDOT employees. Often times these employees worked with many throughout the SDDOT, therefore we want to make all aware in case someone would like to send condolences to the family.

Please email obituary notices/links to the Communications Team at dot.communications@state.sd.us.